

Comments of Greg Schmidt, Trustee of the Village of Croton-on-Hudson, on the Millennium Pipeline Project.

My name is Greg Schmidt and I am a Trustee of the Village of Croton-on-Hudson. I serve as the Liaison to the Board of the Jane E. Lytle Memorial Arboretum, a Village-owned nature preserve located in the path of the proposed pipeline.

The Village's Arboretum is a 20.3-acre wildlife refuge and public educational park containing a wetland of unusual ecological quality. The wetland is created by the fact that the Arboretum is located in a three-sided basin that collects water from surrounding hillsides and streams, including a multi-stream system that crosses the ConEd right-of-way. The Arboretum wetland drains directly into a stream that flows to the Hudson River. Its highly varied vegetation including high canopy trees is an essential component of this unique and complex ecosystem.

As described in detail in the Village's Amicus Brief, the Village's LWRP as well as its wetlands protection law both contain policies designed specifically to protect wetlands of this character, by restricting development in wetlands and in the buffer zone around such wetlands.

As proposed, the Millennium pipeline route will traverse the multi-stream water courses emanating from the Con Ed property and in the process clear-cut a wide construction path through the Arboretum, removing trees and eliminating large portions of the forested buffer between the wetland and the right-of-way. The viability of the wetland will be threatened, and the very character of the Arboretum will be severely diminished.

As a charter member of the Village's Trails Committee, I would also like to comment briefly on the pipeline's impacts to trails and scenic resources in the Village. After passage of the LWRP in 1992, the Village formed the Croton Trails program. One outcome of the program was the creation of the spectacular and heavily used Highland Trail. The Highland Trail is protected under the coastal policies in our LWRP, and is a component of the Hudson River Valley Greenway. The proposed pipeline route will obliterate sections of the Highland Trail, remove extensive amounts of vegetation, and permanently scar some of the most scenic areas of the Village and of the Hudson River Valley.

This Village and its citizens have worked extremely hard to protect and enhance the Arboretum, the Trails System, and other natural and scenic areas of the Village. These are examples of how the Village has effectively created accessible, educational facilities, while at the same time protecting the waters, coastal resources, and scenic values unique to this region. We ask that the Department of Commerce recognize the effort we have invested to protect these important natural resources and uphold the State's objection to this pipeline.